

has no access to technology at all. In fact, less than 10 percent of households with income below \$20,000 own computers or have used the Internet, an alarming statistic. Unless this changes, these poor families, in both rural and urban areas, will be left behind. Millions of Americans will not have the tools necessary to compete in the new economy and will become the first second-class citizens of the information age.

The digital divide has replaced Y2K as the major tech crisis facing America. Educators, Federal and local legislators and industry leaders have all begun to realize that the digital divide in America is a reality and are taking steps to bring technology to schools and libraries across America. We as public officials applaud them for their philanthropic efforts.

In addition, there are current and pending Federal legislation that provides incentives for private corporations to increase computer donations. The increased charitable deduction for computers under Tax Code section 170(e)(6) has boosted computer contributions to public schools. The additional tax incentives proposed in the New Millennium Classroom Act, H.R. 2303, and the President's budget proposal, will provide further inducements and will extend access to libraries and technology centers. I support both these efforts.

However, these efforts are not enough. To truly bridge the digital divide, we must build a public-private partnership to bolster these efforts, and, more importantly, extend technology access to every home in America. Only then will these children and their families truly gain an appreciation for technology and the Internet, in the home, unfettered by the constraints of an institutional setting.

The legislation which we introduced this morning provides the incentives to bridge this gap and ignite the massive effort needed to make the information age a classless society. The legislation will induce private companies to donate computers, Internet access, software and technology training to schools, libraries, computer centers, and homes of poor families. In addition, the tax incentives will make it less costly for poor families to purchase computers.

Let me tell you what the legislation will do: first, the legislation will provide a refundable credit equal to 50 percent of the cost for computer purchases by families receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit, up to \$500. While the costs of computers and Internet access are dropping, the cost of a computer still remains a barrier for many low-income families and many working families. Returning half of the cost of the computer to these families, or, in some cases, all, if computers are less expensive, will help to lessen the financial

toll. Just a little assistance can go a long way towards helping working families help themselves and provide a brighter future for their children.

Second, the legislation increases the charitable deduction for computer donations to the higher of the depreciated costs of the computer and the market price of the computer.

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Many corporations have already stepped up to the plate and have offered their assistance in trying to bridge this digital divide. However, if we are truly to give every American access to technology, more has to be done and here government should play a role. As a result of this provision, computer manufacturers will have a greater incentive to donate unsold computers because they can deduct the full value of the computer.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, nonmanufacturers will also have a greater incentive to donate computer equipment even where the depreciated cost of the computer exceeds the market price of the computer. Under current law, it is more economical for many nonmanufacturers to throw away used computers than to donate them to charity because they can take a higher tax deduction for disposing of the computer than for donating it. That is clearly bad tax policy, Mr. Speaker, and thankfully this provision will change that result.

Third, the legislation will extend the special charitable deduction for computer donations through 2004 and expand it to include donations, not only to libraries and training centers, but also to nonprofits that provide computer technology to poor families.

The experience of Computers for Youth in New York City which to date has delivered 103 fully-loaded Pentium computers to the homes of 7th and 8th graders in a South Bronx middle school highlights the need to extend these tax incentives to nonprofit organizations that are placing computers in the homes of poor families.

Computers for Youth has scratched the surface in this one place in New York. We need to encourage similar efforts by nonprofits across the country.

In conclusion, the President has placed priority on this issue and included \$2 billion of tax incentives in his budget. I applaud him for this effort. This legislation goes even further to bridge the digital divide by focusing itself not only on provisions outside the home, but to bring computers to every home of every poor family in America. I appreciate this chance to bring this legislation to the American people.

HONORING DONNIS H. THOMPSON ON 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity to recognize the achievements of one of Hawaii's extraordinary women as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the National Women's History Project.

Dr. Donnis H. Thompson virtually founded women's collegiate athletics in Hawaii. She was one of the individuals who inspired my authorship of federal Title IX legislation by highlighting the inequities in funding of women's collegiate sports. During her 30 years at the University of Hawaii, Dr. Thompson pioneered numerous health and athletic programs. She served as Hawaii's first woman Superintendent of Education, was the first Women's Director of Athletics at the University of Hawaii, and authored the innovative "Vision of Excellence," a 10-year blueprint for public education. Dr. Thompson has been a state and national leader in promoting girls and women's participation in sports and in promoting civil rights.

Donnis Thompson is the recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., National Outstanding Service Award, a member of the University of Hawaii Hall of Fame, and an Honor Fellow of the National Association of Girls and Women in Sports. April 15, 1981 was proclaimed as "Donnis Thompson Day" in the State of Hawaii.

Donnis is a dear friend and one of the women whose opinion and advice I value most highly. Today I celebrate her life of achievement and the positive impact she has had on improving opportunity for women in Hawaii.

FAIRLY COMPENSATING OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to start my comments off tonight by reading a poem that I think reminds us of just how important the men and women in uniform are to this Nation.

And the poem is written by a Father Denis Edward O'Brien, the United States Marine Corps, and it says:

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag.

It is the soldier who serves beneath the flag.

It is the soldier whose coffin is draped by the flag.

It is the soldier who allows the protester to burn the flag.